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Soviet and East European Attitudes Toward MBFR

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SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN  
ATTITUDES TOWARD MBFR

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## CONTENTS

	Page
PRINCIPAL JUDGMENTS .....	1
THE ESTIMATE .....	4
Soviet Premises and Aims in Détente .....	4
The General Soviet Approach to MBFR .....	6
The Course of Negotiations .....	8
US and Soviet Force Reductions .....	11
Collateral Constraints .....	13
Verification and Inspection .....	13
MBFR Phase II—A Common Ceiling .....	14
The Role of the East Europeans .....	14
A Soviet Conception of the Outcome .....	15

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## SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TOWARD MBFR

### PRINCIPAL JUDGMENTS

The USSR's engagement in MBFR negotiations has come as a by-product of its broader détente policies, and the Soviet leaders view MBFR itself as a vehicle for furthering these policies. They perceive that the US Government is under various pressures to achieve fairly rapid results, and they hope this will give them a negotiating edge.

Neither in MBFR, nor in their broader détente policies for that matter, are the Soviets working for a fundamental reconciliation between East and West nor are they interested in underwriting West Europe's stability and security. They have no intention of allowing East-West relaxation to lead to an attenuation of Soviet authority or Communist Party control in Eastern Europe. The Soviets would see much greater disadvantages than potential gains in an agreement which substantially altered present force levels or combat capabilities on either the NATO or Warsaw Pact sides. A central and recurring theme in negotiations will be the claim that the Warsaw Pact does not have a significant military edge over NATO in Europe and cannot agree therefore to making unequal cuts in its forces. The Soviets will hold hard to the position that the existing relationship of forces should remain essentially unchanged.

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The Soviets would have a decidedly negative first reaction to a Western proposal calling for them to withdraw one of their tank armies, with men and equipment, while the US would have flexibility as to the kinds of units to be withdrawn and the disposition of equipment. The Soviets would also refuse to accept the proposition that a common ceiling for Warsaw Pact and NATO ground forces should be the goal of follow-on negotiations. The Soviets might even question whether proposals of this kind were bona fide. And they might, in anticipation of such proposals or in response to them, attempt to alter the bargaining framework by bringing forward their own counterproposals.

However they play these issues, they will not want the negotiations to break down or become indefinitely stalemated. Perhaps their tactic would be to attempt to force the Western side to scale down its overall requirements and to make concessions with respect to the separate elements of its proposals. They could, for example, seek a *quid pro quo* in US armored forces in return for any reduction in their tank formations. They would also want to explore the possibility of trade-offs involving US tactical nuclear forces in Europe.

It will be the aim of the Soviets to have a minimum of collateral constraints attached to a reductions agreement. They would, in particular, oppose measures which could effectively restrict their ability to move forces into or within Eastern Europe. They are sure to contend that the requirements of verification should be met to the fullest extent possible by "national technical means."

Although the Soviets believe that they are in a strong bargaining position in MBFR, they will want to appear reasonable and to keep the negotiations progressing. How much or how little "give" there will be in their negotiating position will depend partly on their assessment of the urgency of the US need to achieve early agreement. The USSR is likely to recognize, at the same time, that the US and its European allies will regard its position in negotiations as a test of the genuineness of its interest in détente. And as negotiations proceed, the Soviet position will probably be influenced by "linkages" which will be set up between MBFR and other matters, such as SALT and East-West trade.

The outcome of the first phase of negotiations will, of course, be conditioned by the interaction of the positions of the two sides in the

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negotiating process. In the end, however, the Soviets would probably be prepared to accept an agreement based on the following ingredients:

- reductions limited to US and Soviet forces in Central Europe
- an order of magnitude of 10 to 15 percent applying to reductions of ground forces
- some asymmetry in terms of larger numerical Soviet troop reductions than US troop reductions, with compensating US withdrawal of some tactical nuclear elements
- a minimum of collateral restraints and verification provisions.

They would also see advantages in agreeing to follow-on negotiations, especially because of their desire to secure reductions in West German forces. But they would not agree to having the goals of a further phase (e.g., a common ceiling) laid out in advance.

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## THE ESTIMATE

1. Soviet authorities now refer to the "great importance" of the forthcoming MBFR talks, but their overriding interest is in détente not in force reductions *per se*. Only when Moscow became convinced that this major effort to adjust political and economic relations with the US and Western Europe could be set back by a refusal to negotiate on MBFR did it agree to negotiate and to accept a first, tentative link between détente and the discussion of concrete European security issues. The USSR's approach to force reductions will depend heavily on what it wants from détente.

### Soviet Premises and Aims in Détente

2. The Soviet leadership has evidently become convinced that a climate of eased East-West relations and certain forms of cooperation, apart from reducing the dangers of war, provide the most favorable setting for the USSR to improve its international position, especially its position in Europe. Broadly speaking, the USSR hopes through détente to achieve many of the objectives it had long sought in a German peace treaty. In addition, it evidently hopes that détente will lead to a lessening of US influence in Europe and an erosion of NATO solidarity. At the same time,

the USSR hopes that détente will help to counter the Chinese challenge and to repair weaknesses in its position in Eastern Europe and at home. Such a policy proceeds from an assessment that the West for its part wants a period of relaxation and is prepared to pay a certain price to get it. More specifically:

- The Soviet leaders consider détente necessary to generate the broader economic relations with the West which they are counting on to help them to overcome the USSR's technological shortcomings and to compensate for agricultural failings. And, if détente in its various aspects induced Western countries to ease their defense efforts, the Soviets could eventually gain greater flexibility in the allocation of their resources between the military and civilian sectors.
- Moscow expects détente to give tacit sanction to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. It probably supposes, at the same time, that in an atmosphere of eased East-West relations the US and the West Europeans will have greater difficulty in settling their trade and monetary differences, the West Europeans' confi-

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dence in the US commitment to their defense will erode, and the USSR will be better able to influence the evolution of political, economic, and military relationships among the West European states as well as their policies toward the USSR and Eastern Europe.

- The Soviet leaders say, and seem to believe, that the "correlation of international forces" has shifted in the USSR's favor and hence that the US' world influence has begun to recede. Meanwhile, however, they are concerned to insure that the USSR's relative position in strategic weapons is maintained or improved; they would think that to the extent that a reduction in US suspicions about their intentions diminishes US competitiveness in military matters this objective will be advanced. At the same time, they greatly fear the prospect of increased collaboration between their chief rivals, the US and China, and regard the offer of improved US-Soviet relations as a means of limiting Sino-American rapprochement. They also see that in certain situations some increase of cooperation between the US and the USSR may be essential to prevent conflicts in the Third World from getting out of control, with dangerous consequences for both.

3. Détente has now come to occupy a central place in Soviet policy. Soviet leaders have chosen this course because it seems to them to be the one that works best in the given circumstances. They almost certainly do not consider themselves bound to it for the indefinite future; they might even believe that Western power will eventually decline to a point which would automatically confer such ascendancy on the USSR as to obviate the need for conciliatory policies. Yet as a practical matter, it would be impossible for the Soviet leaders to formulate policy cogently or

realistically on the basis of a timetable which set a firm date for turning off the détente tap. The Soviet leaders, whoever they may be, will in fact have good reasons for wanting to preserve the main features of the present line as long as it is not thought to be having disruptive effects in the USSR and Eastern Europe and as long as the US refuses to concede them a decisive lead in strategic power, China remains hostile and its strength continues to grow, Western Europe maintains a strong defense connection with the US and continues movement toward unification, and the Soviet economy remains afflicted with serious defects.

4. Although there can be doubt about how Soviet leaders think about the duration of détente, there is little question about the limits they intend to apply to its scope. They are determined not to permit détente to open the USSR to a dangerous influx of Western influence and ideas. They have no intention of allowing East-West relaxation to lead to an attenuation of Soviet authority or Communist Party control in Eastern Europe—they seek an opposite result. Equally, the Soviet leaders do not aim at a fundamental reconciliation between East and West nor are they interested in underwriting Western Europe's stability and security. Thus there is much which will argue in Moscow for great care in the management of its détente policy. This will accord also with the instincts of Brezhnev himself, who is no gambler and knows that by taking the lead in this policy he is vulnerable to political recriminations if it is perceived not to be yielding the desired results or is priced too high. There is no reason to think that Brezhnev is now threatened in this way—his position is strong and he evidently has a solid Politburo consensus for his present course. But the consensus will need to be constantly tended and confirmed. He will especially want to assure himself of

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the continuing assent of those members of the Politburo with proprietary responsibilities for the ideology, the Party machinery, the security apparatus, and the defense and heavy industry establishments, for whom détente raises questions of particular concern.

#### The General Soviet Approach to MBFR

5. The Soviets recognize that the very act of engagement in negotiations will make certain demands on them—this helps to account for the wariness with which they have moved into MBFR. If Moscow's attitude toward MBFR had not been conditioned by the broader requirements of its policy toward the West, it might have concluded that it stood to gain more if there were no negotiations at all. It could have supposed that the US would be obliged before too much time had gone by to reduce its forces in Europe whether there was a negotiated agreement or not. West Germany's Ostpolitik and the German-Soviet treaty which emerged from it were big steps in establishing the legitimacy of the Soviet position in Eastern Europe. Moscow expected further gains in this respect from the projected conference on European security (CSCE); it was not interested in a new European security structure for its own sake. It also believed that such a conference would help to establish its right to a larger and continuing voice in West Europe's affairs, and that, having been given evidence of the USSR's devotion to the principles of security in Europe, the West would be encouraged to expand its economic relations with the USSR. The success of the US and its European allies in convincing the Soviets that engagement in MBFR was an essential condition of a CSCE was undoubtedly important in obtaining Soviet agreement to negotiate.

6. This is not the whole explanation, however. It is very likely that Moscow had come to believe not only that it could not easily

avoid negotiations but that engagement in negotiations could be advantageous to its broad objectives, provided the outcome promised:

- to maintain or improve the Soviet/Warsaw Pact margin of advantage in force levels and combat capabilities in Central Europe
- to provide additional Western sanction for the *status quo* in Eastern Europe, including a sizable Soviet military presence there
- to create a framework in which the reduction of US forces in Europe would be assured but controlled in such a way as to preclude undesirable political and military reactions in Western Europe
- to enable the USSR to exert some continuing influence on West Europe's defense arrangements.

7. It follows that the Soviets would consider disadvantageous any MBFR terms which did not meet the foregoing criteria or even pointed in the opposite direction, that is to say, terms which:

- significantly altered the existing relative strengths of Soviet-US or Warsaw Pact-NATO forces in the West's favor
- called for a change in the composition or posture of Warsaw Pact forces which might appreciably diminish their offensive capabilities or constrain their flexibility of action
- impaired the political-security function of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe or limited the ability of Soviet forces to intervene in the countries of Eastern Europe in an emergency
- strengthened the basis for the US military presence in Europe

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- increased substantially the proportionate weight in NATO of West German forces
- gave the West Europeans an incentive to move toward comprehensive military integration.

8. The Soviets will recognize that an agreement meeting all of their criteria is scarcely obtainable, but a balancing of considerations of this kind will, we believe, go far toward determining the goals the Soviets will set themselves in negotiations. They are likely to believe that the best agreement they could actually obtain is one which left the overall relationship of East-West forces in Central Europe essentially unchanged.

9. The Soviets do not consider that maintaining an adequate posture vis-à-vis NATO requires them to keep their forces in Central Europe at precisely their present levels, even though for planning purposes they may proceed on "worst case" assumptions about NATO capabilities. Nor are they likely to believe that the requirements of stability in Eastern Europe preclude a reduction of the levels of Soviet stationed forces. But they almost certainly are unwilling to contemplate massive cuts, at any rate in any initial accord. This would not necessarily be because they would have concluded that large mutual reductions, even if larger on their side, would in all circumstances be militarily disadvantageous. But Soviet political leaders and their military advisers would instinctively think in terms of incremental changes rather than more substantial ones which would mean tampering with the basic force structure. They might fear, in addition, that far-reaching changes of this kind would be politically destabilizing in both Eastern and Western Europe. And they are familiar with Western disarmament literature which has related requirements for control or verification to the size of reductions, and they would presumably expect that

in the case of sizable cuts the West would require extensive verification measures and collateral constraints—of a kind which they would regard as excessively restrictive and intrusive—to offset the USSR's favorable geographical position. Nor, as we have previously concluded, is there reason to believe that the USSR's internal economic problems or the need to augment Soviet forces on the border with China are great enough to move it in this direction.<sup>1</sup>

10. *The Vienna Exploratory Talks.* Six months of initial East-West talks in Vienna revealed little about Soviet positions on MBFR that was not already foreshadowed or foreseeable. The Soviets indicated that they felt themselves under no time pressure to proceed to actual negotiations and were moreover determined to insure that CSCE was well-launched before they committed themselves to an opening date for MBFR negotiations. Informal statements by Soviet representatives strengthened the supposition that Moscow will at the outset of negotiations reject the assertion that the relationship of forces in Central Europe is greatly in its favor, and will contend that this relationship has to be viewed in the context of the forces the West could readily bring to bear from all sources in a crisis or conflict situation. The Soviets will argue on this basis that reductions in Central Europe which were substantially asymmetrical would violate the principle of "undiminished security" on which any agreement would have to rest. The Soviets also indicated their aversion to extensive collateral constraints and verification measures.

11. The only real issue of substance on which there was direct engagement in Vienna, however, was the issue of whether Hungary

<sup>1</sup> In NIE 11/20-73, "The Soviet Approach to Force Reductions in Europe," dated 11 January 1973, SECRET/SENSITIVE, paragraphs 24-25.

should be included in a potential reductions area. It is probable that the Soviets had not decided in advance to engage on the issue at that stage. But they were obliged to by the Western side's efforts to designate which countries were to be full participants in the exploratory talks and thus to anticipate the reductions area for negotiations. The Soviets, by refusing to accept this position—which they were no doubt encouraged to do by their belief that the Western side was not prepared to stick on the point—signaled that in the negotiations proper they will start from the presumption that Hungary is not to be part of the reductions area. They would go on to argue that, if Hungary is to be included in any reductions or constraints provisions, NATO will have to provide appropriate enlargement of the area on its side.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Course of Negotiations

12. *Soviet Negotiating Style and Tactics.* To adopt the practice of repeated or protracted stonewalling would probably be seen by the Soviets as not serving their interests vis-à-vis the West. They will appreciate that the US, and perhaps even more the West Europeans, because of their concern for the effect of MBFR on their security, will regard the USSR's behavior as a test of the genuineness of its détente posture. But they will want the Western side to have the impression that there are no pressures on them to come to early agreement, and they will take as long as they think necessary on the issues they decide to contest.

13. The Soviets will renew their efforts to establish a special Soviet-US working relationship in MBFR. They will do this because they will see themselves and the US as the key

<sup>2</sup> With Hungary excluded, the presumed reductions area comprises West and East Germany, the Benelux countries, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

participants behind whom the others will have to fall into line and because they know that any suggestion of superpower bilateralism arouses anxieties among the West Europeans that can be useful to the USSR within and beyond the MBFR context. As they would on any other occasion—and as astute negotiators—the Soviets will also be looking for the bargaining advantages which the opportunity to play on differences within a multinational opposing team naturally offers. They will, for example, know about, or discover through the negotiating process, differences which are likely to persist between the US and some of its allies with respect, among other questions, to: the desirability of pre-reduction stabilizing measures; the geographical extent of a possible post-reduction constraints area; the rigorousness of verification requirements; and the phasing of national force reductions. And, probably more than on anything else, the Soviets will be looking for ways to capitalize on the US interest in fairly rapid first-phase reductions as against the concern of most US allies to insure a negotiation more extended in time and scope.

14. Assuming that the opening round of negotiations is concerned with establishing the premises for negotiations, the Soviets in their presentations will aim at eliciting information which will enable them to anticipate subsequent Western negotiating positions and tactics, but they will also be attempting to shape the terms of reference for negotiations. Beyond giving their view of the requirements imposed by the principle of undiminished security, they may want to engage in some further fencing on the question of what exactly will comprise the area of reductions. They will probably also contend that the negotiations should concentrate first of all on reductions; therefore, other issues—e.g., collateral constraints, the phasing of reductions, and verification—cannot be properly

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considered until there is preliminary agreement on the nature and extent of reductions. The Soviets are likely to indicate, in addition, that they expect the negotiation of arms control in Europe to be a protracted process and that the process will be facilitated if the negotiators strive initially for a limited and simple agreement.

15. The Soviets would be more inclined to give the lead in negotiations to the West, rather than taking it themselves, letting the other side come to them with its proposals. But they will probably have a good idea of what Western proposals will look like, and they might see tactical advantages in having a proposal of their own on the table— and before Western parliaments and public opinion—before the Western side does. In this event, the Soviets could propose reductions which were equal in absolute size. An alternative Soviet opener—one which might be more persuasive before Western public opinion—could be one calling for equal percentage reductions of all NATO and Warsaw Pact forces, stationed and indigenous, in the reductions area. The Soviets would argue that such a proposal would not diminish the security of any of the participants and that it would preserve the ratios between East and West and between foreign and national forces which make up the balance of power in Europe.

16. Whatever the order of the proceedings, it is assumed that the pivotal element in the initial stage of negotiations will be a Western proposal along the lines of the US proposal now under consideration in NATO. This involves (a) certain "stabilizing" measures to be carried out prior to reductions, and (b) the presentation of a framework for reductions calling for:

- a first-phase reduction of a Soviet tank army, and a reduction of an equal per-

centage (15 percent) of US manpower with the form of the US reduction unspecified<sup>3</sup>

- the Soviets to withdraw equipment (including 1,700 tanks) as well as personnel, the US being left with its options in this regard open
- commitment to a further phase of negotiations in which the goal would be to bring NATO (US and non-US) and Warsaw Pact (Soviet and non-Soviet) ground forces in the reductions area down to equal ceilings, the Russians being given to understand that the West is aiming at levels of approximately 700,000 men on each side.<sup>4</sup>

17. The Soviets would not at the outset accept such a basis for negotiations in whole or in part. They might treat the Western proposals as an inflated opening bargaining position. Although they might raise questions inside and outside the negotiations about the seriousness of the Western approach, they would probably take care not to overplay this line in a way which would leave the negotiations stalled at an early stage. If they had not brought forward a broad proposal of their own—of the kind already referred to—they could do so at this point. In general, they would be most likely to adopt a moderate stance while attempting to show that the West was making exorbitant demands on them. From such a position they could proceed to push and pull on the various elements in the Western proposals, seeking to discover

<sup>3</sup> This would entail, according to the data currently available, a reduction of approximately 30,000 US personnel and 68,000 on the Soviet side.

<sup>4</sup> To reach such a ceiling, the Warsaw Pact would have to reduce its present strength—in two phases—by something like 225,000 men, whereas NATO cuts would be on the order of 81,000 (once again, according to currently available data).

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where there was "give" and, at the same time, testing the degree of Allied resolve and internal cohesion.

18. *Pre-reduction stabilizing measures.*<sup>5</sup> The Russians understand that collateral controls in some form will have to figure in any reductions agreement reached, but, if they have their way, these will have few teeth in them, no matter at what stage they might be applied. From their point of view, the disadvantages of extensive controls on the disposition of forces would almost certainly outweigh the benefits. Advantages could accrue to them from measures of this kind, if, as a result, they got the right to intrude more deeply in NATO military affairs and perhaps later a chance to inhibit the elaboration of any new West European defense arrangements. But offsetting this, Soviet political leaders, strongly seconded by military leaders, would see in such measures—which would deny them full freedom in the operational control of their forces on the NATO front and restrict the movement of Soviet forces within and into Eastern Europe—the potential for extremely undesirable military effects and political repercussions.

19. Yet the Soviets would probably find it hard to reject proposals for pre-reduction measures out of hand. In fact, if they foresaw that agreement on reductions was likely to be slow in coming, they might see utility in having a token agreement on constraints as a way of showing progress and facilitating movement in the negotiations. In this case,

<sup>5</sup> The Western allies will be seeking from the Russians, apart from reductions, agreement on a variety of collateral arms control measures designed to facilitate reductions by enhancing mutual confidence, and, subsequently, to insure compliance with the reductions agreement and to assist verification. These fall into two general categories—those that would precede reductions, and those that would either accompany or take effect after them. The first category is discussed here, the second in paragraphs 29-30.

they would be trying to pare Western proposals down to a minimum, e.g., to those calling for the pre-announcement of, or an exchange of observers at, maneuvers in the reductions area (assuming that agreement had not been reached to negotiate measures of this sort in the CSCE forum). The USSR would not agree to having constraints applied to its Western Military Districts nor accept any constraints which were not strictly reciprocal. Soviet negotiators would reply to Western proposals for pre-reduction measures which were fairly ambitious in scope, e.g., sought to place limits on the movement of forces in the reductions area, with the argument that such decisions could not be taken until the nature of the reductions themselves had been agreed on.

20. The Soviets, for their part, could have in stock some proposals of their own, more political and declaratory in nature, which could be put forward as confidence-building measures, for example:

- a declaration on the non-use of nuclear weapons tied to a renunciation of force generally
- a convention on the prevention of nuclear war along the lines of the US-Soviet agreement at Summit II<sup>6</sup>
- a mutual understanding to forego during the period of negotiations steps which

<sup>6</sup> The key provision of this agreement (Article IV) states: "If at any time relations between the Parties or between either Party and other countries appear to involve the risk of nuclear conflict, or if relations between countries not parties to this Agreement appear to involve the risk of nuclear war between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or between either Party and other countries, the United States and the Soviet Union, acting in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement, shall immediately enter into urgent consultations with each other and make every effort to avert this risk."

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could substantially alter the relationship of forces in Central Europe

- a declaratory restriction on, or a specified percentage reduction in, military budgets.

#### US and Soviet Force Reductions

21. Certain lines of argument which the USSR will take in the face of the Western proposal for first-phase US and Soviet reductions are predictable. In trying to set up a bargaining position, the Soviets will contend that, all factors considered, there is an approximate balance between Eastern and Western military strengths in Central Europe—a balance which they have repeatedly asserted has kept the peace in Europe for more than 20 years—and that this would be upset by unequal Soviet reductions unless other aspects of the balance were adjusted as well. This, the Soviets would argue, would be a prolonged and difficult task, and they could point to some of the factors that would have to be taken into account in such a calculation: the capabilities of US and other NATO forces which could readily be deployed to Central Europe from elsewhere; French forces available in or near the reductions area; airlift and sealift capabilities enabling the US to return withdrawn forces rapidly; asymmetries in weapons and equipment favoring the West with respect, for instance, to tactical aircraft, tactical nuclear weapons, and antitank weapons; and West Germany's mobilization capability.

22. The Soviets would most likely focus their attack on the provisions of the first-phase reduction proposal on two issues: (a) that the application of equal percentage cuts only to US and Soviet ground forces would call for inequitably larger Soviet reductions; and (b) that the proposal was unfair in calling for Soviet reductions in terms of organiza-

tional structure and equipment, while specifying only a manpower cut on the US side. We believe, however, that the Russians will accept the proposition of a first-phase reduction confined to their forces and those of the US, although not without first exploring the chances of having some West German forces included. And after vigorous insistence on the need for preserving a putative equilibrium, the Soviets could be brought to accept asymmetrical reductions of Soviet and US manpower provided they obtained sufficient compensation in the other terms of an agreement. As the negotiations proceed, the Soviet negotiators will be attempting to discover, through the bargaining process and in constant consultation with Moscow, which Western proposals or terms can be altered to the USSR's advantage. They may, for example, examine whether smaller cuts are obtainable and desirable.

23. The Soviets will still insist on the West's altering its proposals with regard to the elements to be withdrawn. They would not agree to take their cuts almost entirely in combat forces, e.g., tanks, if the US indicated it intended to take a large part of its reductions through thinning-out or the withdrawal of non-combat or support units. Nor would they agree to terms more restrictive for themselves than for the US with respect to the withdrawal of equipment or the disposition of the withdrawn forces. They will find serious objections to withdrawing a tank army. One objection would be that, since in Soviet practice an army is assigned responsibility for a geographical sector, the removal of one army would require extensive changes in the assignments of the remaining armies. Another would be that the withdrawal of an entire army formation, men and equipment, would entail the removal of specialized combat units, including some with tactical nuclear weapons, and of combat service support units. The

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Soviets would, moreover, not want to get into discussion with NATO on exactly what the make-up of its tank army is. They would argue that, since the term "army" designates a command structure of varied composition, it is not suited to serve as a unit for negotiation and that, if there is to be discussion of particular kinds of components, NATO should state its proposals in terms of such Soviet units as divisions.

24. There are some reasons why the Soviets would prefer reductions to be carried out by withdrawal of complete ground force units rather than by thinning-out, or by some combination of these methods. The first method would have the advantage from their point of view of leaving readiness levels undisturbed. It would, at the same time, create fewer verification problems for the West and might thus result in the Soviets' being subjected to fewer demands in this regard. There is, however, no good indication of what present Soviet thinking is on this question, nor are the precedents instructive. Soviet unilateral withdrawals from East Germany in 1957 were in the form of complete units. But subsequent withdrawals from East Germany in 1964 were accomplished by thinning-out. In the present case, the thinning-out method—provided the Soviets could persuade the West to accept it—would have the advantage for them of being almost impossible to verify and of permitting a rapid return to pre-reduction strength. The approach they actually take on this issue will, of course, depend on the state of play of the negotiations more generally. On balance, we think it likely that the Soviets, in seeking operational flexibility and in weighing considerations of negotiability, will choose in favor of an agreement combining both unit withdrawals and personnel reductions.

25. For the sake of equity, the Soviets would want some payment in US armor for any reduction of their tank formations—their

asking price could be a US Army Corps. But they will also want to discover what kind of mixed-package offers the West may have in mind. A "tank-tacnuke" deal could have many attractions for them. They would be more interested in a reduction of US nuclear-capable aircraft than in nuclear warheads. In particular, the withdrawal as part of such a deal of US F-4s—which come under the Soviet heading of forward-based systems (FBS)—would reduce what they regard as a potential threat to the western USSR. They could also expect to achieve by the removal of these aircraft and other US nuclear systems a proportionately higher reduction of US combat capability for an equivalent manpower reduction than they would be subject to themselves because manpower requirements for most nuclear-delivery units are less than for tank units.

26. At the same time, the Soviets would look to the possible political effects of a US trade-off in nuclear systems. They know that the mere suggestion that the US is prepared to negotiate over its forward-based nuclear forces causes uneasiness among West Europeans and they could hope to profit from this. There would indeed be concern in NATO over the impact of such a move on deterrence and over its implications for Allied participation in NATO nuclear arrangements.

27. The Soviets would not, however, want to pay what they would regard as a disproportionately high price in tanks or other force elements for the withdrawal of relatively small numbers of US nuclear weapons. There could be a variety of reasons for this reluctance: it would be evident to the Soviets that a substantial portion of US nuclear elements would remain; they would have difficulty in verifying which elements had in fact been withdrawn; and they would reckon that the withdrawn elements, aircraft and warheads, could rapidly be returned to the theater.



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What seems likely to happen, then, is that the Soviets, with a Western "tacnuke" offer before them, will attempt to get the US to raise its offer in nuclears, and that, failing this, they will try to take a smaller slice in their tanks than the West asks for.

28. It seems unlikely that the Soviets will decide to go beyond this and make a major issue of theater nuclear forces in the forthcoming phase of MBFR negotiations. The temptation to do so will be there, but by succumbing to it the Soviets would open the door to a wide-ranging discussion of all theater nuclear forces in which Soviet LRA bombers, IRBMs/MRBMs and some ICBMs would inevitably come into question. And where US FBS were concerned, the Soviets might believe that their bargaining opportunities were better in SALT, or, at least, that this avenue should be further explored.

#### Collateral Constraints

29. Many of the ancillary arms control measures which will be proposed to the Russians will raise issues for them as crucial as issues related to the reductions themselves. By and large, they will regard such constraints as serving the interests of the West more than their own and they will aim at keeping them to a minimum. They would be least negative toward the kind of provisions which would be inherently susceptible of flexible interpretation and discretionary implementation. They would probably acknowledge, for instance, that the two sides would need to pledge themselves in some form not to take steps which would significantly change the force levels and structures which would result from reductions. They would, however, want such an undertaking to be largely declaratory in nature. They would be more likely to agree to giving notification of major movements of forces *into* the reductions area than of major

movements *within* the area, but in either case they would try to insure that they were left latitude regarding the timing of notification. They might propose as a further step the creation of a standing consultative commission with general responsibility for checking on the implementation of the reductions agreement.

30. The USSR would, on the other hand, strenuously oppose constraints that would limit its ability to rearrange its forces in Central Europe after reductions or to augment them if it should consider it necessary to do so to deal with an "internal" security problem. For these reasons, the Soviets would want to limit the rigorousness of constraints on the movement of forces into the reductions area or movements across national boundaries within the area. In addition, the Soviets would take the position that such constraints as might be agreed to would have to apply to both sides equally and in no case could be extended to cover the western USSR. They would no doubt indicate that Western insistence on extensive and complicated constraints would be a serious obstacle to a reductions agreement.

#### Verification and Inspection

31. Questions concerning verification and inspection will be among the most difficult that will arise in the negotiations. The Warsaw Pact side will argue strongly that the requirements of verification and inspection should be met to the fullest extent possible by "national technical means." They would probably contend that the first-phase reductions agreement under consideration could, in fact, be verified with a high degree of confidence by these means. There is some chance that they would agree to certain additional measures: to the establishment of inspection posts in the reductions area to permit observation during the period that with-

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drawals were being carried out, or, less likely, to giving Western military liaison missions periodic access to certain entry points for Soviet men and equipment such as Frankfurt/Oder. The Soviets would, of course, claim reciprocal rights in the Western reductions area. They would not allow the West to check in the USSR itself on the location and status of withdrawn forces.

#### MBFR Phase II—A Common Ceiling

32. The Soviets probably expect that there will be a second phase of negotiations if the first is successful, and they would agree to it at that point. Indeed, if they had already demanded West German reductions in the first phase and had failed to get them, they would insist on a second phase. They would, in any event, want to show that they favor a continuing process of disarmament in Europe. They would, in addition, want follow-on negotiations in order to stimulate further US cuts and to enable them to keep their hand in on European security questions. But for tactical reasons and because the decision-making establishment in Moscow will not wish to move deeper into MBFR except at a cautious and deliberate pace, the Soviets would not agree to establishing specific goals for the next phase in advance. They will maintain that such goals will have to be worked out in the subsequent phase itself.

33. Unless the Soviet assessment of the current relationship of forces between the Warsaw Pact and NATO is quite different from our own, it is difficult to see how the Soviet government could be brought to accept the concept of a common ceiling for ground forces. This would suppose that Moscow was prepared to go from a position with which it has no reason to be dissatisfied to a quite different one which could contain many political and military uncertainties. The Soviet political and

military bureaucracies would at least want much time to consider the concept and its potential effects before deciding whether to discuss it seriously with the West.

34. At the point at which the proposal for a common ceiling on ground forces is raised in the forthcoming negotiations, the Soviets will rehearse their objections to unequal reductions (see footnote 4 on page 9). They could counter with a proposal to include air force manpower under a ceiling. Or they could reject the concept itself, alluding to the great complications with respect to data bases, verification, and the ratios of national forces that would have to be overcome before such an agreement could be reached. They would argue that such an agreement could only be considered within the framework of an even more comprehensive agreement affecting a much broader area than Central Europe. They could repeat their proposal for equal percentage cuts, on the order of 10 percent, of *all* forces in Central Europe. In any case, the Soviets would almost certainly suggest that in present circumstances the idea of a common ceiling represents a handicap to negotiations and that it should be set aside in the interest of progress on less ambitious but more realizable goals.

#### The Role of the East Europeans

35. It is clear enough that the Romanians dislike the MBFR conference, objecting that it is a bloc-to-bloc undertaking. But they evidently intend to play as active a role in it as they can, arguing for broader participation, direct linkage to CSCE, and such pet projects of theirs as Balkan regional disarmament. The other East European countries generally favor MBFR, but they do not consider themselves in a position to claim a substantial part in negotiations at this juncture. None of the national leaderships, not even the East Germans and Czechs, would feel great unease at the

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prospect of limited Soviet reductions. One issue which could foreseeably arise between the Russians and their allies, even in connection with a fairly simple agreement, concerns verification and constraints.

36. The East Europeans' interests and concerns would be greater in the case of MBFR agreements which went beyond fairly simple US and Soviet reductions, and here there would be room for divergences between them and the Russians. There are few leaders of these countries—even the most loyal and dutiful of them—who do not hope to one or another degree eventually to gain increased freedom from the USSR in the conduct of their affairs. Some of them certainly are apprehensive that MBFR could, to the extent that it underwrote the *status quo* in Eastern Europe, help to disappoint these hopes. Many of them will, on the contrary, favor agreements which would limit the ability of Soviet military forces to move within or onto their territories. The East Europeans will also want to have their say when the time comes on the more particular question of indigenous force cuts, since there is interest among them in reducing their own forces and expenditures and, conversely, in insuring that Soviet reductions do not require them to strengthen theirs.

37. Moscow's anticipation that problems of this kind might eventually arise would give it a further reason for wanting to proceed carefully into the more complicated areas of negotiations. But at this stage East European views count for little with Moscow; extensive multilateral consultations on MBFR issues such as have taken place in NATO have not occurred within the Warsaw Pact. For now, the East Europeans seem little able to influence Soviet positions in MBFR. The exploratory talks gave no sign that they will exercise effective leverage: the Hungarians

appear to have resented being obliged by the Russians to become observers in the proceedings rather than direct participants but swallowed their resentment. The Poles, more experienced in disarmament questions than the other East Europeans, are likely to remain active on the fringes of the talks, taking particular interest in matters pertaining to nuclear and West German forces. But they will not depart substantially from the Soviet line. The Romanians will continue to see themselves as defenders of the rights of the smaller European states. But the Romanians may continue to be as ineffective in their defiance of the Soviet line on MBFR as they were in the exploratory stage and might only succeed in disposing the other East Europeans to keep their heads down.

#### A Soviet Conception of the Outcome

38. If the way the talks were going was not to the Soviets' liking, they would look for devices to bring pressure on the West. It could be argued that many of the political advantages that the Soviets might seek in MBFR could be achieved by "mutual example" rather than by a negotiated agreement. The possibility of a Soviet unilateral cut coupled with an invitation to the West to follow suit cannot be ruled out. Such a move appears unlikely, however: Moscow has had ample opportunity to play this card in recent years but has not chosen to do so. The Soviets would evidently prefer a negotiated agreement.

39. The Soviets plainly see themselves in a strong bargaining position in MBFR. The amount of "give" in their position on reductions as well as on the question of follow-on negotiations will hinge in good part on how strong they think the pressures are on the US Government to achieve a fairly rapid first-phase agreement. The Soviets will probably have obtained whatever they are going to get

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from a CSCE before MBFR negotiations are very far along and the West will have lost this source of leverage. Nevertheless, Moscow cannot afford to bargain solely on the basis of what it thinks the US wants or will give; it will also have to take into account concerns in Western Europe if its larger aims there are to be advanced. Furthermore, the Soviet leadership has, because it has allowed MBFR to be put on the list of major East-West undertakings, an incentive to see that it produces some results. (Brezhnev could, for example, think that a first-phase MBFR agreement would at some point make a suitable centerpiece for a US-Soviet Summit meeting.) And what actually results from MBFR talks, and when, could very well become linked in Moscow's calculations to what is happening in SALT and how the USSR's economic relations with the West are developing: Moscow might consider it necessary to show itself forthcoming in MBFR in order to secure movement in those other areas, but the Soviets will also be looking for the chance to establish a "reverse linkage," holding out the prospect of Soviet concessions in MBFR in return for US concessions outside MBFR.

40. We conclude that the Soviets are likely to regard as an acceptable outcome to the first phase of MBFR negotiations an agreement based on the following ingredients:

- reductions limited to US and Soviet forces in Central Europe

- an order of magnitude of 10 to 15 percent applying to reductions of ground forces

- some asymmetry in terms of larger numerical Soviet troop reductions than US troop reductions, with compensating US withdrawal of some tactical nuclear elements

- a minimum of collateral constraints and verification provisions.

41. We estimate that the Soviets will also be prepared to move into a second phase of negotiations. In part this will be because they want to maintain the momentum of détente, but they will be interested, in addition, in obtaining reductions in West German forces and in investigating the possibility of further cuts in Western nuclear forces. The Soviets will not, however, be proceeding on the premise that MBFR should lead on to a comprehensive European arms control agreement or to East-West military parity in Central Europe. They are not at this stage persuaded that they cannot have both détente and a margin of military superiority in Europe. Thus they are unlikely to move very far or very rapidly in any further talks; the main conditioning elements in the longer run will not be the interaction of the negotiating positions themselves nearly so much as certain broad extrinsic factors—i.e., the overall course of Soviet relations with the West and with China and the condition of the Soviet economy.

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